

Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 EB-11 DLOS-07 COA-02 CG-00 DOTE-00 IO-14

DRC-01 /130 W

----- 077516

R 292101Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2984

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

INFO AMCONSUL CALI

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

USCINCSB

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 4675

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CG, VE

SUBJECT: COLOMBIAN-VENEZUELAN OFFSHORE BOUNDARY DISPUTE: OPTIMISTIC
PRESS REPORTS NOT WELL FOUNDED

1. THE BOGOTA PRESS HAS REPORTED OPTIMISTICALLY DURING THE PAST
FEW DAYS ON THE PROSPECTS OF FOREIGN MINISTERS VAZQUEZ AND SCHACHT
REACHING A DEFINITIVE SETTLEMENT OF THE GULF OF VENEZUELA BOUNDARY
DISPUTE. BOGOTA DAILIES, BOTH CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL, RAN FRONT
PAGE STORIES DESCRIBING A SETTLEMENT AS IMMINENT. FOREIGN MINISTER
VAZQUEZ SOMEWHAT DAMPENED THE EUPHORIA WITH HIS MAY 27 STATEMENT:
POINTING OUT THAT AN ACCORD WAS BEYOND THE REACH OF THE PRESENT
MEETING. SUBSEQUENT REPORTS HAVE BEEN MORE BALANCED, ESPECIALLY SINCE
THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF VAZQUEZ'S RETURN WITHOUT AN AGREEMENT.

2. FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCES REGARD ANY SETTLEMENT IN THE NEAR
FUTURE AS UNLIKELY. THEIR ESTIMATE WAS BASED ON THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS
OF THE QUESTION AND THE SUBSTANTIAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS, INCLUDING
THE FACT THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT HAS ONLY A LITTLE MORE THAN
TWO MONTHS LEFT IN OFFICE. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS DO BELIEVE
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THAT A SETTLEMENT WILL, IN TIME, BE ACHIEVED. THEY DO NOT,

HOWEVER, BELIEVE THAT SUCH AGREEMENT IS LIKELY DURING THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT THE VIEWS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS REFLECT A MORE ACCURATE PICTURE OF SETTLEMENT PROSPECTS THAN DO THE HIGHLY OPTIMISTIC REPORTS OF THE BOGOTA PRESS. WE DO NOT, HOWEVER, RULE OUT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SOME INTERIM AGREEMENT, SUCH AS A JOINT STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES, ON THE BASIS OF WHICH THE NEXT COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE ABLE TO REACH A SETTLEMENT WITH VENEZUELA. VAZQUEZ HAS STATED, ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, HIS DETERMINATION TO MOVE THE BOUNDARY QUESTION TOWARD RESOLUTION AND WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO LEAVE BEHIND SOME TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF HIS LABORS IN THAT FIELD.

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